

Health care administrator will be a county employee

By **ELIZABETH MARTIN**
Staff Writer

The Sullivan County Commissioners are interviewing for a Sullivan County health care administrator who will be a county employee for the first time since January 2005. The county has previously employed an agency to administer the nursing home in Unity, but has decided to hire the position itself.

"It's a strong policy decision on behalf of the elected leadership and I think it's a good thing," Sullivan County Manager Ed Gil de Rubio said. "We're ready for it."

An announcement is expected within a week of the new administrator, Gil de Rubio said before the commissioners meeting Tuesday.

David Laplante was named the temporary Sullivan County Health Care Administrator in

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July. He stepped in when Genesis Healthcare was replaced by Landmark Health Solution as the nursing home administrator.

Laplante formulated a proactive strategic plan to better meet patients and residents needs. The nursing home has had difficulties with staffing, low census, failing inspections and being over budget.

Laplante's last day was mid-September.

"The person who is coming on

will have a tall order on his hands," Gil de Rubio said.

The administrator will walk into the mist of union negotiations, a continued process of marketing the nursing home and financial matters, he said.

"The union negotiations are going really, really well," Gil de Rubio said at the meeting. "It's not the best world but they're going really well, commissioners."

Commissioner chair Ethel Jarvis said the candidates were all high quality.

The candidates should have a masters degree in public health and a background in both the private and public nursing sector, Gil de Rubio said.

The quality of the candidate is more important than who the person works for, commissioner Jeff Barrette said.

"We have a direct say in who this person is," he said.

Elizabeth Martin can be reached at (800) 545-0347 Ext. 103 or at emartin@eagletimes.com.